

*Annual Riverside Citizen Survey*  
*Measuring the Performance of Government Services*

Survey Highlights Report  
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## Chapter One: Introduction

The Citizen Survey is the cornerstone of government's effective communication with the public. When coupled with a municipal strategic plan, council goals or priorities, and performance measurements, the citizen survey demonstrates our receptiveness to the citizen needs and expectations. The Citizen Survey also:

- ❖ Helps management and elected officials assess citizen satisfaction with the results of our work
- ❖ Identifies areas where programs are performing above or below expectations
- ❖ Provides program managers with important information on clientele and service usage
- ❖ Demonstrates government's commitment to obtain citizen feedback and respond to this feedback
- ❖ Increases the public's trust in its government

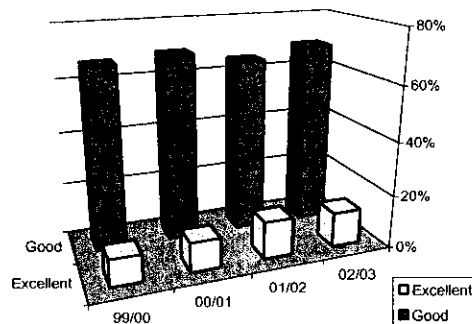
If performed on a continual basis, as we do in Riverside, surveys have the important advantage of providing managers and the electorate with statistically significant and consistent information regarding citizen perception of City services.

In this year's survey, City staff directly responsible for the service in question demonstrated its responsiveness by addressing nearly 171 concerns through telephone calls, personalized letters, or direct visits to the citizens (see Question 24 Report in the Appendix).

Finally, the Citizen Survey itself is a major tool for bilateral communication. As citizens provide invaluable feedback on a number of city services, the City responds by incorporating this information into resource allocation decisions and strategic planning. Most importantly, the City responds by reporting the survey results back to the community.

As will be seen from this survey report and the accompanying materials, citizen satisfaction with city services is mixed. Positive trends include garbage collection service, downtown safety, overall library service, street lighting, appearance of landscaping and park and recreation facilities daytime safety. On the negative side, a significant decline in ratings was measured in the area of Public Park and recreation service nighttime safety.

**Overall rating of city services**



## Methodology and Analysis

Riverside has been conducting the Citizen Survey for six years now, providing the City with key data for time-trend analyses. As is traditional, the Citizen Survey was mailed out to 3,000 randomly selected resident occupied households and 300 apartment dwellers. City

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staff used the Riverside Public Utilities database of single family residences and apartment dwellings. Riverside's Information Systems department provided the total number of "owner occupied houses" in each zip code. A weighted average from each zip code, excluding the 92521, 92522 zip codes (University of California, Riverside and City Hall) was used. The City's Information Systems department used a computer software program to choose the selected households in a random probability fashion thus minimizing sampling error.

Each household falling in the sample was initially mailed a post card notifying residents that they had been selected to participate. This card also included an invitation and phone number (in Spanish) for residents who preferred a Spanish language translation of the upcoming Citizen Survey.

As of July 30, 2003, 1,036 questionnaires were filled out and returned to the City. The 95% confidence interval for the total sample of 1,036 surveys is +/- 3% (worst case). Therefore, if the survey was conducted 100 times, 95 of those surveys would fall in a range of +/- 3 percentage points of what would have been obtained had every household in the City been interviewed. Confidence intervals for subgroups (e.g., age, zip code, etc) are dependent on their own ending sample size and shown below. Since some sample sizes are smaller than others, their margin of error and confidence interval is higher. For example, given that the sample size in the 92501 zip code is 51, the confidence interval is +/- 14%, but the confidence interval in the 29503 zip code, in which 190 residents responded, is +/- 7%.

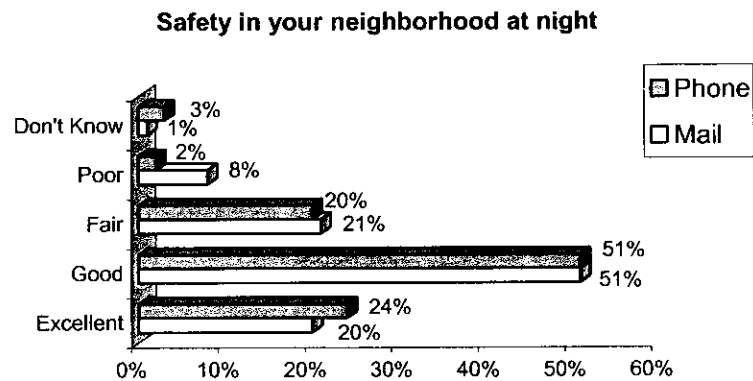
Zip code	Sub sample	Confidence interval	Household income	Sub sample	Confidence interval
	92501	+/- 14%	Under \$25,000	91	+/- 11%
	92503	+/- 7%	\$25,000-\$49,999	242	+/- 7%
	92504	+/- 8%	\$50,000-\$74,999	254	+/- 6%
	92505	+/- 9%	\$75,000-\$149,999	278	+/- 6%
	92506	+/- 6%	\$150,000 and over	50	+/- 12%
	92507	+/- 10%	<b>Education</b>		
	92508	+/- 10%	Up to high school	184	+/- 8%
<b>Age group</b>			Some college	313	+/- 6%
	Up to 34	+/- 9%	Two year degree	150	+/- 9%
	35-44	+/- 7%	B.A./B.S.	151	+/- 7%
	45-59	+/- 5%	Graduate school	206	+/- 7%
	60 and over	+/- 6%	<b>Years lived in city</b>		
<b>Gender</b>			Up to 5 years	148	+/- 8%
	Male	+/- 4%	5-10 years	93	+/- 9%
	Female	+/- 5%	10-15 years	113	+/- 8%
<b>Children in home</b>			More than 15 years	671	+/- 4%
	Yes	+/- 5%			
	No	+/- 4%			

In order to further validate the findings of the report, an independent consulting firm conducted a non-response bias test. Six key questions were pulled from the mailed survey and approved by City staff for this test. By the end of data collection, some 100 households that were among the 3,300 households sent a questionnaire in June, but did not initially

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respond, participated in the abbreviated study. The 95% confidence interval for 100 surveys is +/- 10% (worst case). Based on a review of the data, the phone response appears nearly identical to that of the mailed survey. For example, Question 12 reads: How safe do you feel in your neighborhood during the night? The chart below illustrates the results with the mail survey versus the results with the phone survey.

It is notable that both response sets are nearly identical on the factual questions of zip code, longevity of residence in Riverside, ethnicity, and whether the respondents work in or out of the City. Additionally, responses on two attitudinal questions (safety of their neighborhood at night and rating of City services overall) are also statistically similar. Given these responses, the data indicates that the mailed survey passes the non-response bias test and accurately reflects opinion among the residents of the City of Riverside.



Our observations on trends encompass the years 1998/99 through 2002/03. In addition to comparisons over time, this summary report and the data report also provide results tabulated against geographic (e.g. zip codes) and demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age, education, income, years residing in the City, and whether children live in the household). Demographic breakouts are particularly helpful in identifying those groups that are using the particular service in question or receiving the greatest (or least) impact. Program managers may wish to take note of those groups who are ostensibly not using the services in question and establish whether special targeting ought to take place. As mentioned previously however, due to the total number of respondents varying for each subgroup, sampling errors will differ.

Our aim is to draw a sample of residents that mirrors the City's population demographically as closely as possible. Unfortunately, the drawback of random sampling means particular groups conventionally underrepresented cannot easily be targeted. Our respondents are generally over the age of 34 (e.g., 86% of survey respondents are over the age of 34 versus 58% throughout the City), are White (75% of survey respondents versus census estimates of 59.3%), and have a greater income (63% of respondents have a household income of \$50,000 or greater, as opposed to the City average of 42%) than City averages.

	Census	Citizen Survey
White	46%	75%
Hispanic	38%	16%
Black	7%	4%
Native American	>1%	>2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6%	4%
Other	3%	>3%

This report aims to provide highlights of the Annual Riverside Citizen Survey for 2002-2003 and is organized around eight themes:

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- ❖ City and Neighborhood Livability
- ❖ Customer Service
- ❖ Parks and Recreation
- ❖ Library
- ❖ Development of the City
- ❖ Public Safety
- ❖ Communication with the Public
- ❖ General Quality of Life

The Appendix contains the survey instrument and demographic report, selected illustrated maps, the survey data report which presents the raw results in a user friendly format broken out by geographic location and demographic characteristics, a listing of comments from a select group of the open-ended questions (Questions 22, 23), and the Question 24 Report.

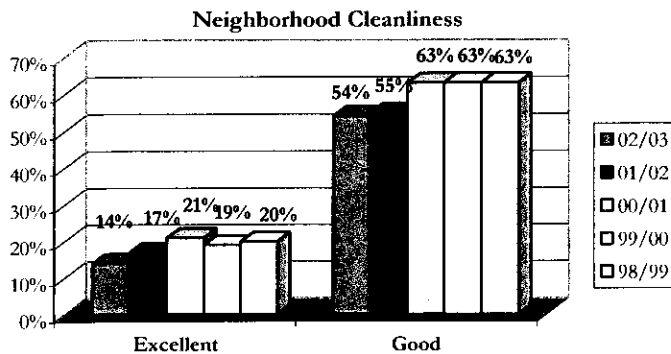
*Note to reader: Non-responses are not included into the overall calculations except for instances where trend analysis occurs. This explains differences among statistics for the same question.*

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## Chapter Two: City and Neighborhood Livability

Municipal government's role in city and neighborhood livability is multifunctional and involves a range of services or programs, including improving neighborhood cleanliness, traffic congestion; refuse collection, speed control, and others. The Citizen Survey addresses citizen satisfaction of some aspects of City and neighborhood life, namely, services provided by the Public Works and Police Departments.

Neighborhood cleanliness can be the responsibility of the Public Works Streets Division, as well as the citizens, themselves. Overall, the

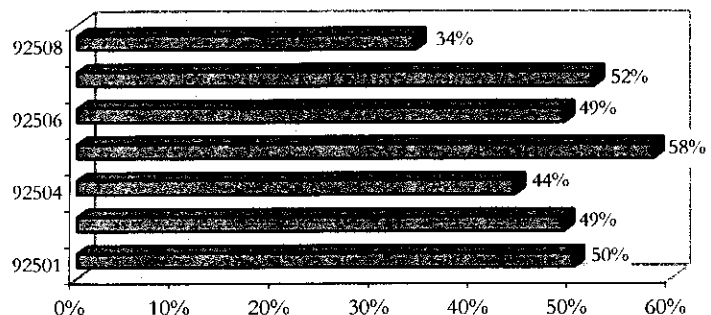


number of citizens rating their neighborhood cleanliness good or excellent has decreased 15 percentage points over the five-year period between 1998/99 to 2002/03: 83% of citizens reported satisfaction in 1998/99 as compared to 63% reporting satisfaction in 2002/03. The zip code that

shows the greatest satisfaction is 92508, followed by 92506. Residents in the 92501 zip code and the 92505 zip code were the least satisfied, rating their neighborhood cleanliness 45% and 50%, respectively.

The City has been part of the growing trend in Southern California: population growth. In the recent census data, the population is 269,402. With an increase in population come the increases in the demands of city services. One of the biggest concerns that exist in a burgeoning city is traffic congestion. Only 48% of all respondents rate the traffic congestion/traffic flow as "excellent" or "good." In the

**Feel "excellent" or "good" about neighborhood traffic congestion**

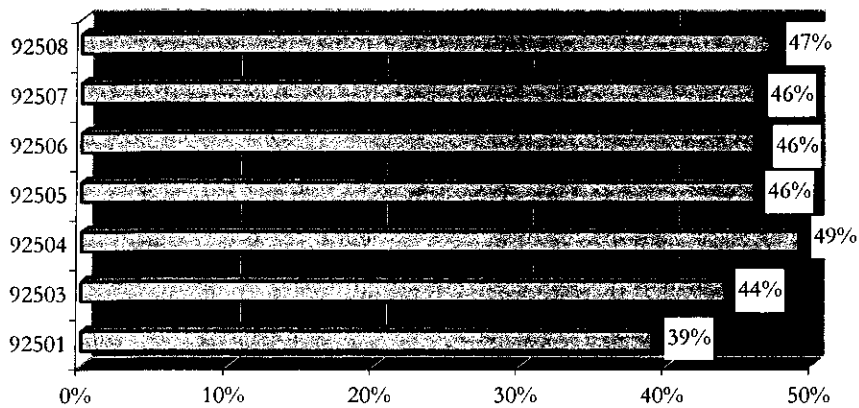


92508 zip code, only 34% of respondents are satisfied with the traffic in their neighborhood. The 92508 area code comprises all of the Orangecrest and part of the Mission Grove areas. These areas are comprised of relatively new residential and commercial development. Also, those residents who have lived in the City fewer than ten years are the most satisfied with the traffic in their neighborhoods, with 55% rating them "excellent" or "good." However, for the long-term residents, those living in the City for more than 15 years, only 47% rated traffic conditions "excellent" or "good."

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**Feel "excellent" or "good" about neighborhood traffic  
speed enforcement**



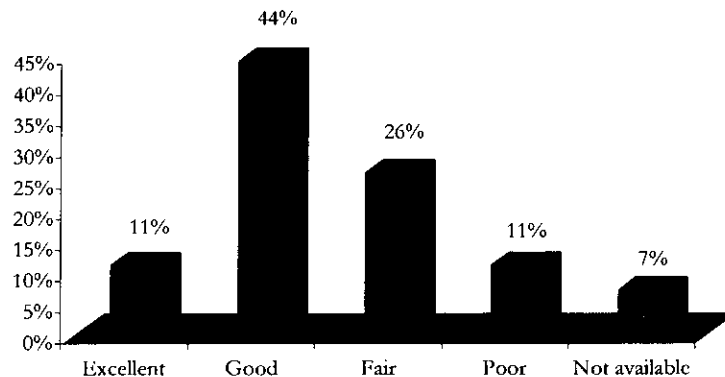
Another area of concern for the City, in addition to traffic congestion, is traffic speed enforcement. Enforcement of the City speeding laws is both a city and neighborhood livability and public safety issue. Only 46% of the respondents in this year's survey felt that traffic speed

enforcement in their neighborhood is "excellent" or "good." The greatest area of concern is in the 92501 zip code, with only 39% of respondents reporting satisfaction with traffic speed enforcement. The zip code where there is the highest satisfaction is 92504, where just under half of those surveyed are satisfied. Like neighborhood traffic congestion, those who have lived the longest in the City tend to be the least satisfied with the enforcement of speeding laws.

The condition of the City's sidewalks also seems to be an issue for discussion. Approximately 55% of the survey respondents rated the City sidewalks as "excellent" or "good." Both age and overgrown trees contribute to the state of disrepair of City sidewalks.

As the City is getting older, its trees are maturing and their roots growing under the sidewalks, causing the cement to break and dislodge. In the geographical breakouts, the 92501 residents are the least satisfied. Only 41% percent of the respondents in this area are satisfied with their neighborhood sidewalks.

**Condition of sidewalks**



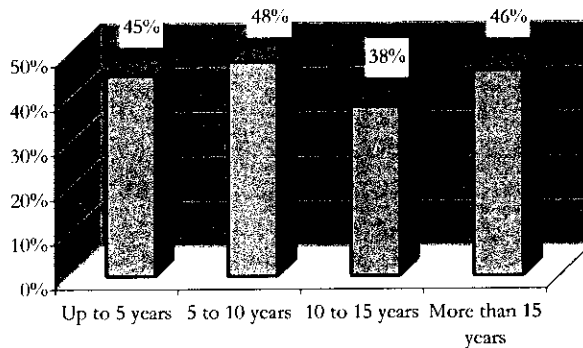
The 92501 area is comprised primarily of the Downtown and Northside neighborhoods, which tend to be older, more established. However, 89% of the residents in the 92508 area are satisfied with their sidewalks. This zip code is home to newer, tract housing built within the past ten years. Of note, is the finding that the level of satisfaction rose steadily with the amount of education completed.



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The final area of concern for the City to address in neighborhood livability is the rideability/smoothness of the streets. According to the survey results, approximately 46% of

**Feel "fair" or "poor" about smoothness or rideability of neighborhood streets**

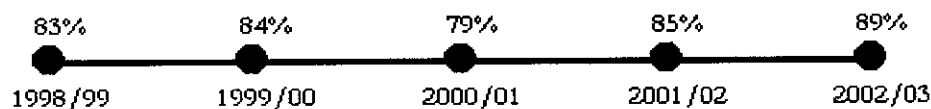
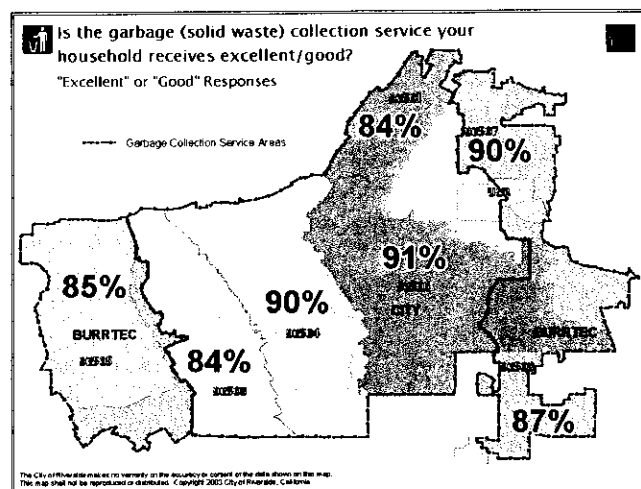


all respondents feel that the rideability of their neighborhood streets is "fair" or "poor." As with neighborhood traffic congestion and sidewalk conditions, the dissatisfaction with street smoothness is correlated to zip code. Only 26% of the residents in the 92508 zip code feel dissatisfied with the smoothness of their streets. That compares to 55% in the 92501 zip code.

The statistics suggest that those who live in older neighborhoods tend to be more discontented with the livability of their neighborhood than those who live in recently established ones.

Year in and year out, one of the highest rated services the City provides is garbage collection.

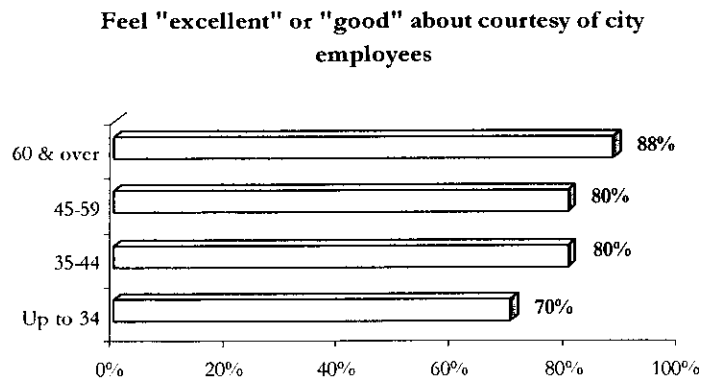
Residential garbage collection in the City of Riverside is processed through city-run refuse collectors and the private, contracted company Burrtec. Approximately 70% of residential refuse collection comes from city-run services, as opposed to 30% from Burrtec. Over the last six years, citizens have been generally satisfied with their refuse collection services. In fact, refuse collection satisfaction is at an all-time high, with 88% of respondents rating their service "excellent" or "good." Those residents in the 92504, 92506 and 92507 area codes are the most pleased, with at least 90% satisfied with their service.



### Chapter Three: Customer Service

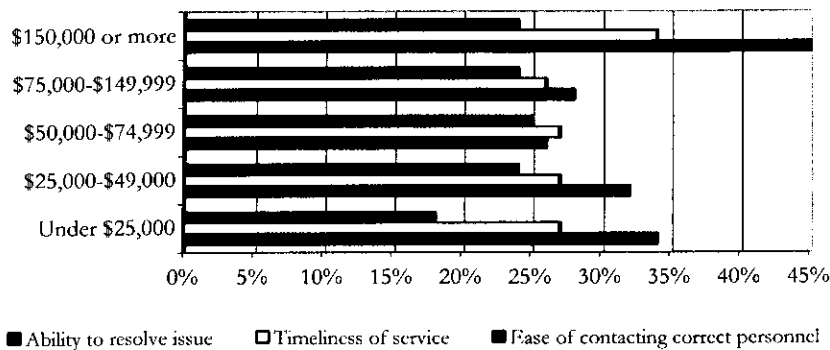
A concurring theme that is running through the vocabulary of municipal officers is "Governments need to run more like businesses." In that sense, governments are refocusing their attention on areas where they are in direct contact with the customer. The City of Riverside's customers not only includes its residents, but local businesses, potential businesses, and other government agencies. Customer service can take on many forms, including contacting the Police or Fire Departments, arriving at City Hall for a permit, or paying a Public Utilities bill. The City has been devising plans of action and examining city practices to enhance and improve customer service, such as providing cross-training, implementing a customer service committee, and redesigning planning and development processes.

For those residents who have had contact with City personnel within the past twelve months, 81% rated the courtesy of employees as "excellent" or "good." Residents under the age of 35 are less likely to be satisfied than those 60 years and older. In fact, 70% of respondents under the age of 35 are satisfied with the courtesy of city employees; however, 88% of individuals 60 years or older rated city employee courtesy as "excellent" or "good." For those who have children, 82% are satisfied with the courtesy, as compared to 81% of those respondents who do not have children.



While the respondents are strongly supportive of the courtesy of city employees, the same cannot be said when it comes to their ability to resolve the issue/answer the question, timeliness of

**Feel "fair" or "poor" about customer service**



service/response, and the ease of contacting the correct official/personnel. Approximately 30% of respondents who have had contact with city personnel found employees' abilities to resolve an issue or answer their questions "fair" or

"poor." For those respondents who make \$150,000 or more, that level of dissatisfaction reaches 45%. Also of concern is the timeliness of service or response of personnel.

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Roughly 27% of all respondents who have had contact with city employees within the past 12 months rate the timeliness of response as "fair" or "poor". Respondents living in the 92503 area code are more likely to be displeased with the timeliness of their service, as 32% rated it "fair" or "poor." Finally, 26% of respondents rate the ease of contacting the correct official or personnel as "fair" or "poor." Again, respondents in the 92503 area code are most displeased, as 34% found their experience(s) trying to contact the appropriate City personnel difficult.

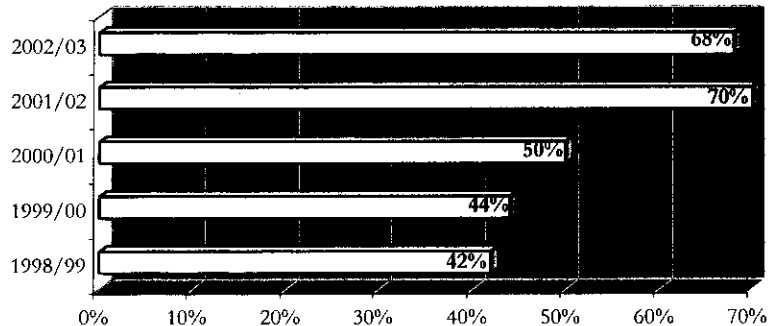
## Chapter Four: Parks and Recreation

Our Park and Recreation Department's mission is to *provide innovative recreational experiences and social enrichment opportunities, and continue to address the changing needs for people of all ages and cultures, in a variety of safe and attractive parks, landscapes, and facilities.* This survey provides information on citizen satisfaction with the parks, recreational facilities, and recreation programming. It also gauges usage, who is not using the services, and potential reasons why they did not. Finally, the survey assesses citizen satisfaction on various service characteristics related to the parks and recreational activities, including condition of equipment, accessibility, hours of operation, adequate number of recreational classes, appearance of landscaping, and safety.

One important measure of a City's success in its provision of quality parks and recreational activities is frequency of usage. Overall, the number of citizens using the parks and/or recreational facilities has grown 26% over the five year period between 1998/99 to 2002/03.

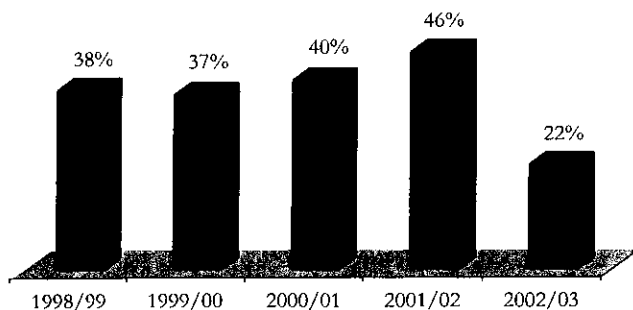
Note: In 2000/01 the question read, "Has anyone in your household used any City of Riverside park, recreational facility, or recreational programming during the past 12 months?" In 2001/02 the question read "Approximately how often did you or a member of your household use a city park and/or recreational facility during the past 12 months?" A case could be made that those who answered "once or twice" would have marked "no" on the 2000/01 questionnaires.

**Used a City park and/or recreational facility during the past 12 months**



A key component to the frequency of usage of the parks and the overall satisfaction is the safety of the park and recreation facilities. In response to citizen complaints on park safety,

**Feel "excellent" or "good" about safety of parks or recreation facilities**



City Council directed staff to develop a community-policing plan called Operation Safe Parks. A cross-departmental working group, comprised of staff members of the Park and Recreation Department and Police Department, developed and implemented an action plan in Myra Lynn Park, which included the establishment of a Neighborhood Park Watch Group. Citizen input was sought and local residents

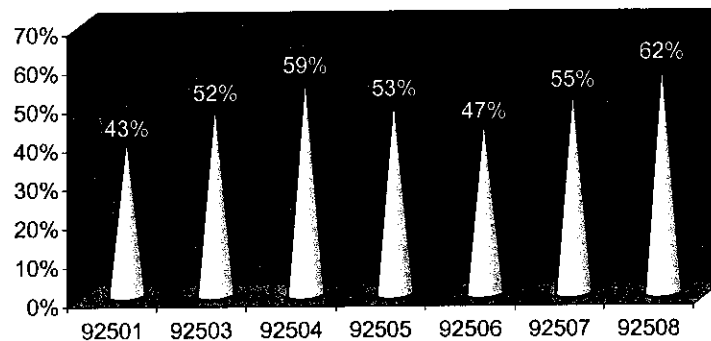
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expressed their perceptions of the park conditions, offered suggestions, and agreed to participate. Based on its success and early lessons learned, the Operation Safe Parks initiative is being carried out in 6 additional parks throughout the City. According to the demographic breakouts, residents in the 92508 zip code feel the safest in their parks, while the residents in the 92501 area feel the least safe. Other important statistical observations include:

- Women feel as safe as men in parks during the day, but less safe than men at night
- White respondents feel less safe than Hispanics
- Those over the age of 59 feel the least safe
- Residents who have children feel more safe than those who do not

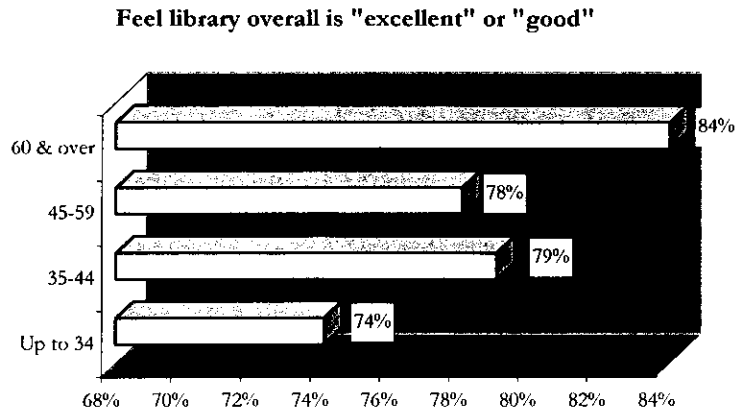
**Feel "excellent or "good" about safety of park and recreation facilities**



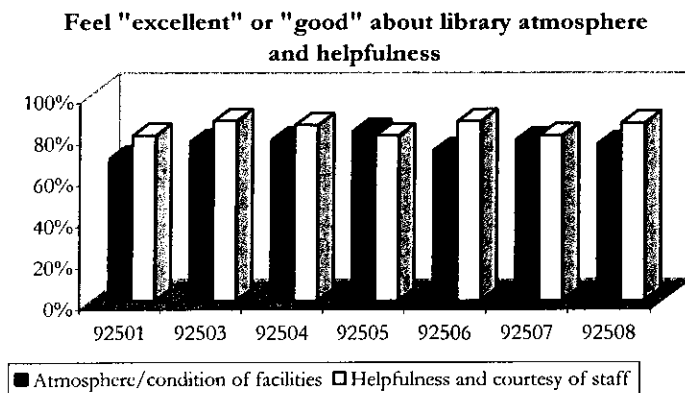
## Chapter Five: Library

Our libraries play a crucial role in promoting personal and professional competence among the citizenry and providing educational and communal opportunities through books, program activities, Internet access, and other resources. In order for the Library to accomplish its mission, citizens need to have easy access to these materials, thus, libraries should be opened during hours that work for the residents' schedules and be located in convenient locales.

Overall, our libraries were rated exceptionally high. Of the 619 people who visited one of the libraries this year, 82% rated the overall quality of the libraries as "excellent" or "good." Residents in the 92506 area code had the highest library satisfaction rating with 85%, while the residents in area codes 92504 and 92507 reported the lowest library rating, both with 79%. Satisfaction with library services generally increased with age, with residents older than 60 years of age reporting an 84% satisfaction rate compared to 74% of those residents under 35.



City libraries also scored high in helpfulness and courtesy of staff and atmosphere/courtesy of library facilities. In fact, 84% of all respondents who have visited the libraries in the past 12 months rated the helpfulness and courtesy of library staff as "excellent" or "good" and 76% of all responses rated the atmosphere/condition of library facilities "excellent" or



"good." For the residents who live in the 92501 area code, 80% are satisfied with the helpfulness and courtesy of staff, but only 69% are pleased with the atmosphere or condition of facilities. In the 92505 area code, 80% of respondents are satisfied with the helpfulness and courtesy of library staff and 82% are pleased with

the atmosphere and condition of the facilities.

Of the 271 open-ended responses given as to why citizens feel dissatisfaction with the Riverside public libraries, the quality of materials was the most consistent response, followed by the condition of the facilities.

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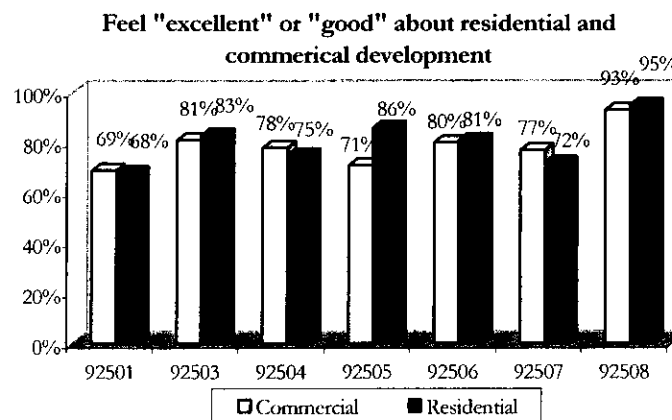
# Of responses % Of total responses		Reasons
23	8%	Need better hours
63	23%	Need better materials
66	24%	Need better facilities
19	7%	Libraries not in convenient location
30	11%	Need better staff
70	26%	Other
Total:	271	

*Note: These statistics do not take into consideration those individuals/families that do not or have not been to a City library because they currently are not happy with the facilities, staff, or materials.*

## Chapter Six: Development of the City

Development, both commercial and residential, is a continuous, never-ending process that municipalities must undertake. When development is ignored or not given its significant importance, urban and/or rural blight, economic recessions, and stagnation overtake what was once vibrancy and economic growth. Too much development can overshadow the historical charm a city creates over many years. Riverside is unique in its struggles to balance both. On one side, Riverside embraces its historic heritage and the tradition of its past. On the other side, there is a focus on new residential and commercial development, annexation, and downtown revitalization. The survey addresses the City's effort in actively promoting and pursuing development, namely in the Planning, Development, and Public Works Departments.

According to the survey results, residents in the City are generally pleased with the residential and commercial development of the City. Of those residents who have had residential development in their neighborhood, 80% rate the quality of appearance as "excellent" or "good." Also, of those residents who have had commercial development in the neighborhood, 80% rate the quality of appearance as "excellent" or "good." Attitudes toward residential and/or commercial development in their neighborhood are strikingly different in each zip code. In the 92501 area code, where there is a combination of older, more established homes coupled with a downtown that has been given a high priority for redevelopment, results are less positive than those in the 92508 area code, an area more recently developed. Also, age also seems to be a factor for attitudes, as the younger participants are more positive towards development than those 60 years of age and older.



The most overwhelmingly negative response to this year's survey is the availability of parking in the downtown area. Approximately 69% of all residents rated the availability of parking in the downtown business area as "fair" or "poor" and only 1% rated it "excellent." Surprisingly, education level seemed to be a factor in the



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satisfaction of downtown parking. For respondents with up to high school degree there was a 16% satisfaction rating, which increased with the amount of education completed, with graduate school attendees reporting a 25% satisfaction rate.

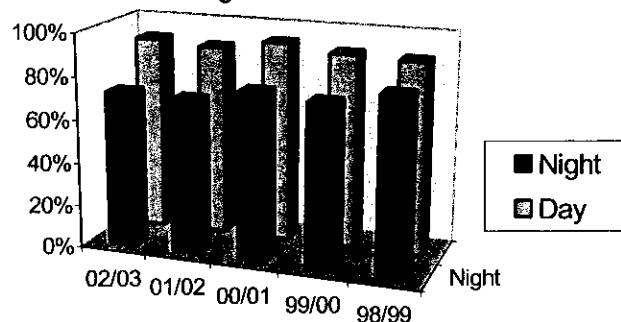
## Chapter Seven: Public Safety

Public Safety, both real and perceived, is of paramount importance to any local government. Although public safety involves work across many city departments, the Citizen Survey primarily covers citizen ratings of police, fire, parks, public works, and public utilities, such as street lighting services.

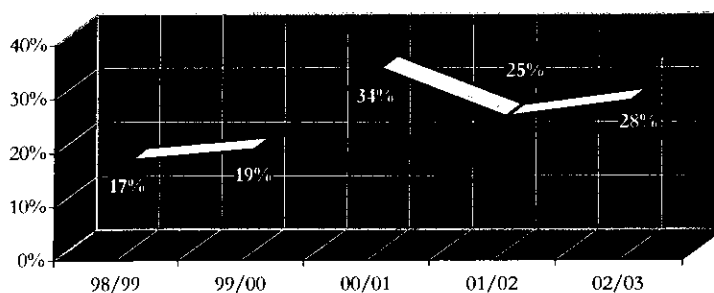
A citizenry that is safe and secure in its surroundings, in neighborhoods, schools, parks, at work, both during the day and at night, is the quintessential outcome sought by municipal leaders. The mission of the Riverside Police Department is to *provide high quality police service through timely responses to calls for service, capably investigating crimes, diligently apprehending criminals, and providing innovative and effective crime prevention strategies through diverse police-community partnerships that promote safer neighborhoods, businesses, schools and parks for all the citizens of Riverside.* Different data gathering methods are used to track progress toward the department's success in improving clearance rates and capably investigating crimes. One measurement is the Citizen Survey, which is a good source for ascertaining citizen feedback and direct experience of the Police Department's work.

Generally, residents in Riverside feel safe in their neighborhoods. That statement has been true over the six years of conducting the survey. In 2002/03, 91% of participants rated the safety of their neighborhood during the day as "excellent" or "good." At night, 71% of the same participants rated the safety of their neighborhood as "excellent" or "good." Residents in the 92506 zip code feel the safest in their neighborhood, with 95% feeling safe during the day and 82% feeling safe during the night. Conversely, residents in the 92501 zip code feel the least safe, with 87% rating the safety of the neighborhood during the day as "excellent" or "good" and 50% feeling safe at night.

Feel "excellent" or "good" about safety of neighborhood



Feel safety of downtown business area at night is "excellent" or "good"



Note: In 2001/02, residents could choose between excellent, good, fair, poor, and don't know. In previous surveys, the choices were very safe, reasonably safe, somewhat safe, very unsafe, and don't know.

One area of continued concern for the City and its public safety officials is the

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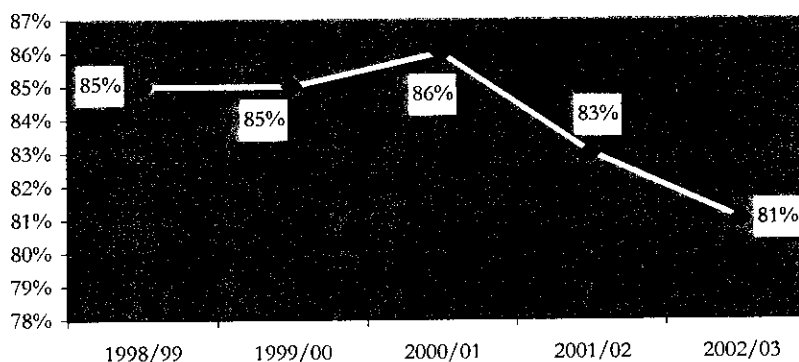
safety of the downtown business during the night. While feelings of safety in the downtown business area showed some remarkable improvement in last year's citizen survey, it is apparent that we must do more to ensure that the perception of safety improves. In the 2002/03 Citizen Survey, there was a slight increase over 2001/02 in how safe the respondents feel. However, only 28% of all respondents felt excellent or good about the safety of the downtown at night. Of the 513 open-ended responses given as to why citizens feel unsafe in the downtown business area during the night, undesirable people, crime/violence, and not enough police presence were most often cited.

# Of responses	% Of total responses	Reasons
184	36%	Undesirable people
53	10%	Crime/ Violence
31	6%	Not enough police
39	8%	Dark/ deserted
206	40%	Other
Total: 513		

Fire protection, and the citizens' rating of this, can be very difficult to measure, especially given the preventative nature of the Fire Department's programs. The number of incidences involving fire that was prevented, especially through programs specifically designed to promote fire prevention, cannot easily be determined.

Nevertheless, our Fire Department, whose mission includes *protecting life, property, and the environment within the City through proactive life safety, community education, and emergency service programs*, can measure the extent to which its work contributes to the citizenry's feeling of safety. The Citizen Survey shows that the percentage of citizens feeling "safe" or "very safe" from fire has decreased slightly from the previous years.

Feel "safe" or "very safe" from fire



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## **Chapter Eight: Communication with the Public**

Surveys themselves serve as an important communication instrument. The results give focus to the responsiveness of our government. Questions within this particular citizen survey provide some insightful information on how the quality of our communication and interaction with the citizens.

A highlight of the Citizen Survey is Question 24:

“Do you have any specific problems or concerns that you would like to hear back from us? If so, please describe.”

Respondents were asked to provide contact information on this question only, which was then passed on to appropriate staff to examine the problem and contact the respondent in regard to this concern. A complete report of the issues raised by some of the respondents and the actions taken by the City is located in the Appendix. Some highlights are:

<b>Citizen Concern</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
Traffic on Magnolia and Madison is so heavy that it blocks the entrance and exit at San Felipe and Madison.	We will evaluate the intersections to see if "Do Not Block Intersection" signs are required.
Hickory Lane near Monroe Elementary needs speed bumps. There are children on the street and cars race down the street.	The street is too short for speed hump installation. She was referred to RPD for speed enforcement and the speed display board
My concern is the type of city trees that are being planted in Riverside, specifically carrotwood trees.	Advised resident about changes of species and will check on a few trees she is concerned about.
Constant noise from train whistles mostly unnecessary when stopped at crossings.	We are in the process of implementing a wayside horn experiment at six crossings. Train horn complaints need to be referred to the railroad.
Traffic on Magnolia and Madison is so heavy that it blocks the entrance and exit at San Felipe and Madison.	We will evaluate the intersections to see if "Do Not Block Intersection" signs are required.

One area the City needs to clearly improve upon is in keeping citizens informed of City matters affecting neighborhoods. Approximately 35% of respondents felt that the City needed to do better in communicating. This is especially true for those in the 92507 area code, as 34% rated City communication “fair” or “poor.” Most respondents who rated City communication as “fair” or “poor” expressed a desire for the City to communicate more effectively through the newspaper and through more newsletters.

This is just a small sampling of the kinds of citizen concerns and feedback of City staff that resulted from this year’s Citizen Survey. It is hoped that the City’s willingness to respond

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will generate further citizen requests for assistance and/or information. After all, a citizenry that is not well informed, or a citizen that fails to see his or her concerns addressed in a meaningful way, cannot be expected to actively participate in the life of the city, something much of our neighborhood work and activity in making our city safer truly demands.

## Chapter Nine: General Quality of Life

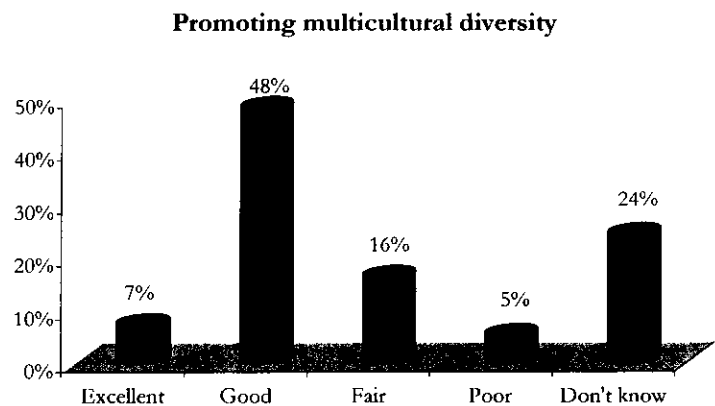
One of the most important responsibilities that a government agency can provide for its residents is a place where city and neighborhood livability, customer service, parks and recreation, libraries, and public safety, to name a few, are optimized to the residents' needs. If these work in accord with others, typically, the general quality of life will improve, the ultimate accomplishment Riverside can strive to achieve. This year's survey saw little movement in the overall satisfaction of city services. For 2002/03, 83% of respondents rated city services good or excellent. Those who responded with the highest satisfaction are (by demographic breakout):

- Residents in the 92506 area code (88%)\*
- Female residents (84%)\*
- Residents between the ages of 45-59 (86%)\*
- Residents who have a 2 year college degree school (86%)\*
- Resident households in the \$50,000-\$75,000 and the \$75,000- \$149,000 income brackets (87%)\*
- Residents who have lived in Riverside up to 5 years (86%)\*
- Residents who have children (85%)\*

\* *Excludes non-responses*

The perception that the City is doing a sufficient job in promoting multicultural diversity is also strong. According to our results, only 5% of respondents believe that the City is promoting multiculturalism poorly, while 16% rated the City's efforts as "fair."

*Note: There are a total of 241 respondents who marked "Don't know" and are not included in the graph on the right*



## **Chapter Ten: Conclusion**

Citizen satisfaction ratings and other information provided in the Citizen Survey are important sources for assessing the extent to which government is performing at expected levels. Elected officials and upper management can use these results for understanding how well their efforts; targets, policy decisions and budgetary choices are working from the perspective of their customers. City response to this citizen feedback will lend credibility to our commitment to deliver high quality and effective services for current and future customers.

These results will be integrated into the City's Managing for Results initiative, used for monitoring existing programs and designing new ones, published in the budget document and tracked over time to assess progress made toward achieving our citywide goals and objectives.

In addition to the quantifiable indicators tabulated from the survey questions, the Survey also provided space for citizens to offer suggestions on improving city services and to give comment on city services with which they are pleased. A complete listing of these comments is provided in the Appendix. For illustrative purposes, some highlights are presented below:

### **Suggestions for improving the quality of the City of Riverside's services**

- ❖ Graffiti clean-up is unfortunately expensive but a must. Maybe more severe crack-down on offenses.
- ❖ Better transportation for seniors.
- ❖ Follow through with code violations i.e., pool with no gate.
- ❖ Get a book store into the new Plaza!
- ❖ Animal Control and Humane Society need more attention and bigger budgets.
- ❖ Improve downtown bus station at University and Brockton.
- ❖ More Energy Star/shade tree rebates offered.
- ❖ I think the city needs to encourage and attract new business on La Sierra.
- ❖ More patrols through the streets at night, also enforcing residential speed zones.
- ❖ Provide more free, more accessible parking, especially for city and state services, businesses and offices in Riverside.
- ❖ More lights in city parks for youth sports practice.
- ❖ We are mainly concerned about traffic jams, speeding cars on Elsinore Rd and overcrowding.
- ❖ Slow growth and get back to orange trees.

### **Comments on city services that you are pleased with**

- ❖ Beautiful median and street side landscaping and maintenance in our area.
- ❖ Downtown family events, fairs, farmer's markets.
- ❖ Excellent Fire Department and Police Department.
- ❖ Garbage collection is timely. Collectors are friendly.
- ❖ I call for graffiti removal and it's removed either that day or the next. When a street light goes out I get a good response. We had a problem with the power to our

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sprinkler box in our private park. The city sent a wonderful worker out who helped search for the problem.

- ❖ I really like the rebate program. I have a shade tree, ceiling fan and evaporation cooler.
- ❖ Library programs like the Read to Me program.
- ❖ Nice parks, libraries and a lot of programs for kids.
- ❖ The tree folks have been very prompt in removing the huge tree branches that have fallen into the street and walkways.
- ❖ The web site and geographic data are exceptional. Everyone in the Building Department is very helpful.

All in all, the citizens appear to be satisfied with the job the City is doing in providing basic services and improving upon the quality of life.

To recap, overall city services increased four percentage points from 79 percent rating services as “good” or “excellent” in 2001/02 to 83 percent in 2002/03.

The top ten ratings the City received on its services are (% – “excellent” or “good”):

1. Safety in neighborhood during the day 91%
2. Helpfulness and courtesy of library staff 85%
3. Garbage (solid waste) collection 89%
4. Quality of appearance for new residential development 82%
5. Safe from fire in neighborhood 81%
6. Overall city services 82%
7. Courtesy of city employees 81%
8. City libraries overall 82%
9. Quality of appearance for new commercial development 80%
10. Convenience of library to home 79%

Areas in need of continued improvement are (% – “fair” or “poor”):

1. Availability of parking in the downtown business area 69%
2. Safety of downtown business area during night 50%
3. Traffic congestion 51%
4. Traffic speed enforcement 50%
5. Rideability/smoothness of streets 46%, Condition of sidewalks 37%
6. Ability to resolve the issue/answer the question 30%
7. Timeliness of service/response 27%
8. City keeps residents informed of city matters in neighborhood 29%
9. Ease of contacting correct official/personnel 26%

The Citizen Survey will be conducted annually as long as funds are budgeted for this purpose. The City will make a resolute effort to increase the response rates and deepen the significance of the demographic breakouts. For example, there will be continued efforts to provide questionnaires in Spanish as well as other languages, to provide follow-up phone calls for the non-respondents, or to offer other advanced methods of communication, such as Internet or phone-only surveys.



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To be fully effective as a tool for performance measurement, citizen surveys need to be implemented in budgeting, strategic planning and management, policy making, program design, and day-to-day activities. Results can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses, monitor progress, compare with other municipalities, and set targets. It gives citizens an opportunity to be heard and to become an integral part of the future budget. When communicated to the public, the City demonstrates that it not only takes the views and comments of its constituents seriously, but also aggressively strives for accountability.